

Online Marketing Explained

Online Marketing Explained provides the knowledge and the understanding of how to market online effectively.

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[Online Marketing Small Business](#)

Online Marketing Small Business Guides

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HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

I have compiled this [Online Marketing Small Business Guide](#) with the Small Business owner in mind. This resource will save you time and money in the set up and implementation of your online marketing campaign.

If you ever need information about online marketing for your small business that is not covered in this guide please visit my [Business Guides](#), [FAQ](#) or [contact me](#) web page and I will do my best to provide the information that you require.

Check back to my website regularly to continue your online marketing education and keep up with future trends for online marketing for Small Business.

[Online Marketing Small Business](#)

Wishing you all the best in your marketing efforts on the Internet.

Yours truly,
Susanne Wickes
[Online Marketing Small Business](#)

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ONLINE MARKETING TERMS

There are some basic terms that you need to know. Visit my [Marketing Terms](#) page whenever you are not sure of a term.

[Marketing Terms](#)

Online Marketing Explained

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You are encouraged to print this book for easy reading.

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Online Marketing Explained

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Online Marketing Explained

Introduction: Online Marketing Explained

What is online marketing and how does it relate to your Small Business?

You may have been marketing and advertising your business, offline, for quite a while now. Advertising that has possibly included giving out your business card, advertising in the Yellow Pages and ads in your local newspaper. You've heard about the Internet, websites and the World Wide Web but you have very little idea of how this relates to your business and don't know where to start.

Perhaps promoting and marketing of businesses online has been a topic of conversation with your business colleagues for a while now. Some of your colleagues have taken the plunge with mixed results but are you convinced? You may be worried that you are going to be left behind if you don't face this issue, move with the times and get savvy. Besides that how are you going to fit this new way of marketing into your busy schedule? How many more minutes can you squeeze out of a day?

Maybe you have been marketing your Small Business online for a while now and you are not receiving the results you expected and want to know more. Where do you get this online marketing education from? Is there an online marketing guide to help you?

Yes, there definitely is! This [Online Marketing Small Business Guide](#) is your own personal online marketing training, it is the best you'll get.

Online Marketing Small Business Guides

[Online Marketing Small Business](#) is owned and operated by Susanne Wickes in Queensland, Australia. Susanne started this venture because she believed that Small Business owners needed assistance to really get a handle on their online marketing.

In the following pages you will find out:

- **What is the World Wide Web – www?**
- **About Marketing and Advertising Online and the Benefits to your Small Business**
- **Where to Start with your Online Marketing efforts**
- **All about Websites, How to determine what you need and what your options are.**
- **About Search Engines and Traffic and how that relates to your online marketing efforts.**

Once you've read this Online Marketing Small Business Guide you will be more informed and have a better understanding of what is involved in setting up your Small Business on the web. Online marketing success for your Small Business will be at your fingertips in this simple, straightforward and easy to understand guide.

Part 1 - World Wide Web

What is the World Wide Web? What is www? If you are going to market your Small Business on the internet you need to have some sort of understanding of what you are working with. Think of this as your introduction to the World Wide Web.

The internet is a world wide network of interconnected computers where users are able to send and receive information all over the world. The World Wide Web (www) is the information available on the internet which is accessed and viewed in browser software such as Internet Explorer or Mozilla Firefox. Think of the internet as a book and the World Wide Web as the text; one cannot function properly without the other.

To market your Small Business online you need a website. You may have been told that you don't and that all you need to do is have your information in an online business directory and that will be enough. I strongly suggest that it is not enough. It boils down to the issues of credibility, efficiency and productivity.

If I found your business in an online directory my first instinct would be to click through to your website and check you out. If you have a website that is graphically pleasing, easy to navigate and tells me what I want to know then chances are you have a new customer.

Your website is your brochure on the web and is a reflection of your business and if done well will assist your customers and potential customers to find you and order from you in the most efficient way possible.

Part 2 - Marketing and Advertising Online

Advantages of advertising online for Small Business

Firstly, let's look at marketing and advertising? Where marketing encompasses the selling and promoting of goods and services, advertising is simply the promotion. Online marketing and advertising takes place exclusively on the Internet.

Online marketing and advertising can include a website, search engine optimization and marketing, pay per click advertising (PPC), Email marketing, newsletter marketing, press releases, online classifieds and/or banner advertising. Purchasing online advertising is a decision not to be taken lightly. You need to do your research and make sure you are getting these online marketing benefits.

Advantages of online advertising:

- Less expensive than offline advertising
- Easy tracking of advertising results
- Immediate response to advertising efforts
- Advertise globally
- Website promote business 24/7
- Effective targeting of potential customers
- Increased profit

[Not sure on some of the terms? Visit our Marketing Terms page here](#)

A Marketing Plan. Why does my business need one?

Marketing plans are simply common sense for small business advertising. With a marketing plan tailored to your Small Business you will always know where you are going, what you are doing, why you are doing it and how much it is costing you.

Benefits are:

- Work within budget guidelines and avoid costly mistakes
- Save time and money
- Get to know your customer, how to attract and keep them
- Know your competitors strengths and weaknesses
- Your Market research will show you the way forward

Tracking

Tracking your advertising allows you to know, without a doubt, how effective your online advertising is. There is advertising tracking software available or you can track your advertising with tracking URL's. For example if you send out an advertisement in a newsletter you use a special web address so you can track how many people clicked through to your site from that ad.

Benefits of Tracking:

- Save money by only spending on effective advertising
- Save time by only managing the campaign that works
- Increase your profits by selling more and spending less

Promoting your business using online methods can increase sales and increase your profits. You need to understand the types of online advertising available and have an effective strategy with the appropriate choice of advertising to really experience the advantages of advertising online.

Part 3 - Where to Start

Where to Start with Online Advertising for your business.

The most obvious place to start is with a website. This is your first step because wherever you advertise online you need a place on the internet where people can find you. You will learn all about websites in the next section which will help you to understand what a website is, what your business needs and how to get one without breaking the bank.

Your website is your brochure on the web but how do people find you?

Customers find you on the web by:

- Entering a term in a search engine relevant to your business and your website comes up in the results (more information on this in the Part 5)
- Knowing your website address from your offline advertising such as business cards, newspaper or yellow pages ads or referral from another person.
- Clicking on a link in an online advertisement you have placed such as an ad in online classifieds, an Ezine, an email or a newsletter.
- Clicking on your website link on another website that you asked to share a link with.

I have my website now what's next?

Whether you are marketing a new business or have been in business for a while you need a marketing plan. You need to set a budget and use a mix of online and offline media as a part of your small business advertising. Your goal with your marketing plan is to get your website address out there so people can find it on the web. You can do your marketing plan yourself or have a professional do it for you.

Who do you trust to assist you with your online advertising?

This is where you really need small business help because the Internet is full of people offering you all kinds of marketing services. I have to say that 95% are not worth investing in. In the offline world word of mouth has always been a good way to find a person or business that can do a good

job for you. It is the same on the World Wide Web. You will find recommendations on this website or you can do your own research through the search engines to find if a company is reputable. You can't hide bad customer service on the internet. News travels fast.

It is a good idea to check:

- Does the company have a professional website?
- Are they easy to contact?
- Can you talk to a real person on the phone?
- Do they have their contact details on their website?
- Do they list a legitimate physical address?
- Are there prices comparable to other companies offering a similar product?
- Can you contact previous customers to see if they were happy with the service?

Small Business advice is so important in the area of online marketing especially if the medium is new to you. Educate yourself with the information from my website so you can make the right choices for your business.

More information:

[BBC news – Do small firms really need a website?](#)

[Wikipedia – What is a website](#)

Part 4 - About Websites

Part 4a - Business Websites

Once you have made the decision to establish a web presence for your Small Business there is certain information about business websites that is essential for you to know before you get started.

Firstly, what is a website?

A website is a collection of files with a web address (URL) and can be accessed through a browser on a computer connected to the internet. These files can include text, graphics, images video and audio. There is usually a home page then any number of other pages linked to each other. The World Wide Web is a huge collection of web sites all hosted on computers called web servers all over the world.

In this day and age it is almost essential for a business to have a website. Most customers and potential customers expect your business to be on the web. Whether you use your website as a simple one page site with your contact details or as a marketing tool to sell goods and services online, a web presence is a smart business move.

What do you need to build a website?

- Domain name
- Website Hosting account
- Web site design

Optional:

Contact/Enquiry forms/Email address
Shopping Cart (if selling products)/Payment Processor (to take payment of goods)

What are the different types of websites?

- One page brochure sites which simply provides contact details
- Sales page websites usually one or two pages selling a product
- Multiple page website with information and graphics and a contact page
- Multiple page website with products, a shopping cart, database and other custom developments

What is the purpose of a website?

The purpose of your website is whatever you wish it to be. It may simply be an online brochure where people can find your contact details. It may be a place for people to get further information about your products or services saving you and your staff time answering offline inquiries. If you are using it as a marketing tool then its purpose will be to attract customers, sell your products and services and increase your profits.

What should you put on my website?

1. **Content – information about your business, products or services**
2. **Pictures – pictures relevant to your business and website content**
3. **Contact Form – a method for people to contact you via the internet (saves time on phone calls and staff time)**

Why will your customer come to your website?

- **Learn more about your product or service**
- **Save time by buying or booking online**
- **Learn more about your business and decide if they want to be your customer**
- **Find your contact details and physical location**
- **Get customer support for questions or concerns**

Part 4b - How to Build a Website

The whole process of building a website should be easy, affordable and hassle free.

How to build a website?

Your options are:

- Build it yourself using website editor software such as DreamWeaver, FrontPage or use a step by step website builder provided by some hosting companies
- Have a web designer build it for you

Build it yourself?

What are your options?

Until recently creating a website for yourself was not an option unless you had the time to study to be a web designer, learn web graphics and the HTML language required to build a website. It is now possible to build your own website using step by step software and templates. If you feel you have the time and patience to build your website yourself then you can save yourself a considerable amount of time and money. You can then maintain your own website and save ongoing costs.

Drawbacks of building your own website:

- Can take a considerable amount of your time
- Can be a steep learning curve especially if using a website editor
- Results can sometimes be disappointing wasting your time and money
- If you choose to maintain the website this can be time consuming
- You may not have the experience in smooth site navigation to produce a site that is easy for customers to navigate

IMPORTANT POINT: You must build the website for your customer not for yourself. Take time to think about your customer, who they are and what they like. Good planning is essential in the building of a quality, successful website.

Don't want to build the website yourself?

How to find the right Web designer:

- **Try and get a word of mouth recommendation from another business owner**
- **Visit sites of other business owners in your field and if you like what you see contact their web designer**
- **Evaluate at least three companies and get quotes**
- **Check out their website and website design portfolio and make sure their designs suit your tastes**
- **Make sure you are going to get the result you want and in the time frame that you expect**

Before you speak to the web designer:

1. **Think about the purpose of your website. What kind of image do you want to present to your customer? What do you want your customers to be able to do when they visit your site?**
2. **Think about the design you would like your website to have. Do some searching on the web for businesses similar to yours and get some ideas on what you like and what you may need.**
3. **Gather together all the information you want on your website. Organize into subjects to give you an indication of how many pages you may need.**
4. **Make a list of all the functions and features you want your website to have. Will you need a shopping cart, a contact/enquiry form, and the like?**
5. **How many email addresses do you think you will need?**
6. **Think about the type of images/pictures you want on your site.**
7. **Think about and choose a preferred domain name that reflects your business.**
8. **Think about and list the words (keywords) that people may use in the search engines to look for a business like yours.**

- 9. Will you write the content for your website or will you need assistance?**
- 10. How internet savvy are you? Will you require assistance to maintain your website? Will you need to be making frequent changes to content? (Can be quite expensive if you cannot make these changes yourself)**

Once you have answered these questions you will have a much clearer idea of what you need. The web designer you choose will interview you about your business and the design and features of your website. If you have given this some thought beforehand it will save you time and money.

Your web designer will take into account your business website needs and your budget. They should create a website plan for you, laying everything out that you will have on your site and give you a quote or bid so you can decide whether to go ahead with the project with them. Be highly suspicious of any web designer who gives you a price without any discussion of your business needs.

Part 4c - Small Business Web Development

Important elements to a great website

- Clear, concise, relevant content
- Simple, consistent page design throughout the site
- Simple navigation and user-friendliness
- Clear relevant images (the less images the better as the site loads faster)
- Content that makes an instant impression

I have been working on the Internet for a number of years and my bias is toward sites that are clean, clear and concise. Websites with too much rambling content, flashy annoying graphics and sites that are difficult to navigate are not open in my browser for long.

Research shows that most people do not read web pages word for word; they scan. Credibility is very important to web users and if your site is high quality, well written and easy to navigate you have a much better chance of holding your visitors attention. If you can hold their attention and win their trust then you have a new customer.

What sort of results can I expect from my website?

If your website is only one page with your contact details then it is unlikely to receive traffic from the search engines. It will however serve the purpose of being a place online that you can send your clients to through your print advertising.

If you are relying on traffic from the search engines to increase your customer base then you need to have your website built accordingly. Search Engine Optimization is a term you will find out about in Part 5. It involves things such as designing your site around popular keywords to ensure you rank high enough in the search engines for your prospective customers to find you.

There are many other strategies which will be part of your business marketing plan that you can implement to make sure you get the results you need from this important investment in your business.

How much do websites cost?

It depends on how many pages you need, whether you will update the content yourself, whether the site uses a database to store information and what other functions your site may require. Websites can cost anywhere from \$100 to many thousands of dollars depending on what you want and need. Some web design companies then charge a monthly fee for website maintenance and optimization. And your website hosting is normally a monthly or yearly fee which can vary considerably.

Obviously if you build and maintain the site yourself then it will be cheaper but you must consider the time you are putting in as well; time is money after all.

Are free websites and hosting alright? Do they do the job?

The question to be asked here is can you afford the risk. Free websites are really only suitable for personal use. The domain name looks unprofessional for a start. Free web hosts have been known to go out of business and they are not suitable for small business websites. You cannot afford to look unprofessional or upset your customers with a website that doesn't function properly.

The biggest problem with free website hosting is the "down" time when your site is not accessible on the internet. Bottom line: you lose customers. Your business is worth the small investment into a reliable website and hosting company. This investment will pay you back in increased sales and satisfied customers into the future.

Part 5 - About Search Engines and Traffic

Part 5a - What are Search Engines?

What are search engines?

According to Wikipedia: A Web search engine is a search engine designed to search for information on the World Wide Web. This information may consist of web pages, images and other types of files.

Search engines assist people to find information on the Internet. The most well known search engines are Google and Yahoo.

How do they work?

Search engines regularly send out automated programs called bots or spiders to “crawl” through the web and read web pages. The spiders then return to the search engine and the results are indexed based on the words in the web pages.

Here's how it works:

1. Visit the Search Engine home page
2. Type a word or phrase into the search box
3. Search engine (SE) goes to its index and finds the most relevant web pages
4. SE returns a list of web pages relating to the search term (sometimes over a million websites)

NB: Research had shown that most people generally only look at the first three pages of search engine results. **REMEMBER THIS POINT.**

Search Engines perform two roles:

1. Provide a service to people on the Internet searching for information

2. Provide a place for businesses to advertise

There aim is to:

- **Provide the most relevant information to search engine users**
- **Provide the best possible result for the businesses advertising with them**

There are hundreds of search engines on the web but Google is by far the most sophisticated and the most popular. They do their job very well and are the most used search engine on the Internet closely followed by Yahoo, Live and Ask.

How do search engines relate to my business?

Search Engines are an integral part of your marketing strategy when you are marketing online. They provide free traffic to your website and an opportunity for effective paid advertising. Search Engines are one of the ONLY ways that people are going to be able to easily find your website on the net if they don't have your website address.

If the purpose of your website is to find new customers and increase profits through increased sales of your product and/or service then traffic from the Search Engines is very important to your Small Business. You will want to be listed preferably on the first page (refer to highlighted point above) of search results for search terms (keywords) related to your business. You may also, as part of your marketing strategy, pay for advertising with the major search engines. Generally, if your campaign is set up correctly, this is money well spent

The major search engines such as Google and Yahoo are the ones that most website owners and developers want their websites listed in because they can bring in free web traffic therefore potentially more customers and sales.

Part 5b - Website Traffic

What is website traffic?

Basically website traffic is how many people visit your website. The more people that visit your website the more likely you are to increase your customer base and your product sales.

How do I get search engine traffic?

One way is to get listed in the Search Engines and for your site to come up, ideally, on the first page of search results when a person puts in a search term related to your business. In order for this to happen your website must be built to be Search Engine friendly.

The other way to be listed in the first page of results is to pay for advertising with the search engines. This paid advertising is generally referred to as Pay per Click (PPC) advertising where you are only charged for the advertising when someone clicks on your ad. There are also sponsored ads as well.

There are millions of websites on the Internet and to have a first page ranking with Google or Yahoo is worth a lot to your business. It is not an easy task and it is best to build your website from scratch with the search engines in mind.

How do I make my site Search Engine friendly?

You make your website search engine friendly by having your site optimized for the Search Engines preferably as it is being built. This is called Search Engine Optimization (SEO). It is your website developer's responsibility not only to build your website but to make sure it is a success and does all the things you expect it to do. SEO is therefore part of your marketing strategy before your website is even built. Your web pages need to be constructed so that they are easy for the search engines to read and index.

Search Engine Optimization may involve:

- Keyword research to find the words and phrases people are using to find your type of business. Choosing a set of keywords that have the least competition therefore you have a greater chance of ranking higher in the search engines result page for those keywords
- Writing content for your website using specific keywords that your customers may use to search for a business such as yours

- Writing content that provides information about your product or service which may be of interest to people
- Submission of your website to the search engines. The big search engines index your site but there are many small search engines that will provide traffic if you submit your site to them.
- Building a website that is easy for the search engines to read and index (i.e. no Flash, Javascript, frames, image maps etc.)
- Making the website easy to navigate
- Building good quality links by creating partnerships with businesses on the web that are similar to yours. Every website owner should employ a Link Building Strategy for their website

A website built without these guidelines will, over time, want to boost their web site traffic due to poor results. They will most probably need to engage the services of an SEO company to improve search engine placement for their site.

What other methods can I use to bring traffic to my website?

- Create valuable, original content about your products and services and this will go a long way to building traffic
- Let your customers know who is behind your business. People need to trust the people they do business with. Don't be afraid of putting some personal information about yourself on your website.
- Treat your customers with respect through your dealings with them and they will share your website address with friends and family and recommend you in there travels around the web. Word of mouth recommendation works just the same on the Internet as it does in the offline world.
- Write Articles in your area of expertise and distribute these to websites looking for quality content. In these articles provide a link to your website and over time receive hits (visits) to your website as more people read your articles.
- Put your web address on your vehicle, business cards and in your print ads.

Other Resources:

Search Engine Watch -

<http://searchenginewatch.com/showPage.html?page=webmasters>

(for those who want to really involved in this information)

SearchMe – List of Australian and International Search Engines

<http://www.searchme.com.au>

The End

Well that's it. I'm sure you can now clearly see the benefits of online marketing and have the knowledge you need to move forward with your strategic internet marketing.

It is certainly a start when you understand the medium you are working with and what is required. A website is essential as your main online marketing tool. Then comes the online advertising and marketing and with your understanding of how Search Engines work and web traffic you are much more able to make good online marketing decisions.

Please don't stop here as I have further guides to assist you to continue your journey into online marketing.

To submit your testimonial about my Small Business Guides and my website Online-Marketing-Small-Business.com please go to our testimonial page.

[Submit your Testimonial Here](#)

I hope you have found this [Online Marketing Small Business Guide](#) to be useful. Please remember to check back to see the new information being added to my website regularly.

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If you ever need information about online marketing for your small business that is not covered in this guide please visit my [FAQ](#) or [contact me](#) web page and I will do my best to provide the information that you require.

All the best,
Susanne Wickes
[Online Marketing Small Business](#)